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former Chief
of the Inspection
General of the
Latvian Legion.

/25/ Osnabrück, 25.5.1949.
Schlossstr. 83.

SUBJECT: History of setting-up of Latvian military
units in Second World War.

To: Baltic Advisory Council at Detmold/Lippe

Re: Enquiry of 20.5.49.

To rectify the real state of things regarding the
conscription of Latvian citizens for service in Latvian
military units during the Second World War I might make the
following statement:

1. As is to be seen from my report of 12.2.49 submitted
to the IRO HQ at Lemgo the annual sets of 1919-1924 were not
drafted in April 1943 but already in the second half of the
month of May 1943 and the first 1000 of conscripted of
these annual sets, after their clothing and after administer-
ing of oath were sent to the front on 30.5.43. One part of
the officers and of the noncommissioned officers were drafted
only in the first half of the month of March 1943.

2. The annual sets 1925/1926 were not conscripted in
September, but already in the end of July 1944. The decree
regarding the drafting of both of these annual sets was put
in operation on July 22, 1944.

May I add to this that the annual set 1925 had been
put under obligation to serve in the compulsory labour
service /Reichsarbeitsdienst/ and the youths who did not
comply with this obligation were enlisted compulsorily
into the Legion.

3. Those Latvians who were enlisted in police units
previous to spring 1943 /formerly Guardsmen Battalions,
afterwards Police Regiments/ are not to be regarded as
volunteers either. As it is to be seen from my report to
the IRO HQ at Lemgo, mentioned above, already in last
months of 1941 Latvian policemen who had engaged themselves
only for common police service and only in the Home Country
/the term of the obligation being 1 year/ were collected
in closed Police Units and contrary to the law sent by
German Authorities to the front. After the one year term
these policemen were not discharged, but were retained as
compulsorily engaged till the end of the war; this on the
ground of a decree of the Minister for Occupied Eastern
Territories Alfred Rosenberg as of 19.12.1941 concerning
the introduction of universal direction to labour in the
occupied eastern territories.

It was not that these just mentioned policemen
of the common police service alone were sent to the front

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in contradiction to the law, it was also that the auxiliary policemen of the so-called group "C", recruited mainly from among the former members of the Home Guards of the Latvian Republic were sent to the front. Among them were mostly persons of rather advanced age and the choice of the population, as farm owners, dairy managers, teachers etc. who did their common work and only in cases of emergency and then only near their abode could be engaged in tasks of common police service, such as short-termed guards, actions against appearing gangs of robbers etc. Notwithstanding this these auxiliary policemen were also collected in the second half of 1942 in units for the purpose of construction of trenches and sent for action near Leningrad. After the completion of construction work these men were not discharged but on the strength of the already mentioned decree of the Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories were retained for front service. These policemen and auxiliary policemen have never got any formal mobilisation order.

4. As regards the men of the Latvian Frontier Guards Regiments, they were all enrolled compulsorily at the beginning of 1944.

In winter 1943/44 when the centre of gravity of the struggle at the eastern front was dislocated and the German command was compelled to retreat its positions at Leningrad and Staraja Russa, the conscription for enrolment into Latvian Frontier Guards Regiments was decreed in the beginning of 1944. These Regiments were to be charged with the direct defence of Latvian frontier. Soon after their setting-up these Regiments were disbanded and their manpower transferred to reserve of the units in action. What annual sets were conscripted for this purpose I can't tell exactly as at that time I was in action at the 15 Latvian Infantry Division. Anyhow men of rather advanced age were conscripted. As far as I can remember it were officers up till annual sets of 1884 and n.c.o.'s up till the annual set 1892.

Yours respectfully

Signed

/A. Silgailis/
Colonel and former Chief
of Staff of the Inspection
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